



THE HealthConnection



Health Department Services Offered During the COVID-19 Pandemic

WIC

No walk-ins. Please call (325) 692-1680.

Immunizations

Immunization & TB clinics are closed, however, if you began your pre-rabies vaccine series and are due for the next dose or are wanting a flu shot, please call us at (325) 692-5600.

Vital Statistics

Birth and Death Certificate requests are being completed by mail-in order only. We are not offering Acknowledgement of Paternity services at this time. Forms can be found at abilenetx.gov/393/vital-statistics.

Lab

Our Lab is not doing bloodwork or pregnancy tests at this time. We are still accepting water samples & rabies samples.

Dental

Our Dental Clinic will only see patients on an emergency basis. If you are experiencing a dental emergency, please call us at (325) 437-4620.

MERCY Health Care Center

MERCY is still open and addressing patient's birth control needs. All other visits, medication refills, or consultations will be handled over the phone. Always call (325) 676-6634 for an appointment if you need to be seen.

Environmental Health

Environmental Health is continuing to address all complaints made regarding restaurants, sewage, and mosquitos.





Self-Care & Isolation

by Meredith Havard, BSW

We live in stressful times. The COVID-19 pandemic can be overwhelming and social isolation can take its toll. As important as it is to take care of your physical health during this time, it's also important to take care of your mental health. Here are some self care tips during these trying times:

Turn off the news

While it is important to keep up with current events, obsessing over them can cause you to worry. If you find yourself obsessing over COVID-19 news, maybe by refreshing social media every few minutes or leaving 24 hour news on all day, take a break. Disconnect from electronics and go for a walk around your house, listen to music, and do something that calms you and makes you happy.

Reach out to friends and family

With social distancing and isolation in effect, it can start to feel lonely. But the digital world can help to connect us. You can video chat, host virtual parties, and even play games with friends and family without leaving your home. Even a simple phone call with a friend can help you feel connected.

Try some new things

A new hobby, new board game, new tv show or movie, or new book, can help occupy your time, stimulate your mind, and help you find activities you really enjoy.

Practice mindfulness

If you're feeling worried or anxious, don't ignore your feelings. Set aside time every day to acknowledge your emotions. Pray, journal, meditate. Anything that helps you to recognize what you're feeling in a way that you have control over can do wonders for your mental state.

Stick to your routines

It can be easy to forget to take care of yourself when your routine is disrupted. Make sure that you're getting enough sleep, doing chores, eating healthy meals at reasonable times and otherwise taking care of yourself. Routines are immensely helpful to our mental health. They provide safety and comfort by providing us certainty in an uncertain time.

If you feel like you are in crisis, reach out and get help

Whether it's a therapist, a spiritual leader, a trusted friend, or a helpline, don't be afraid to ask for help. Some Abilene counseling offices even do appointments virtually, which is an important resource right now.

If you are in emotional distress, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255, or the COVID-19 Mental Health Support Line at 833-986-1919 and talk to someone to get the support you need and deserve.

Life might seem tough right now, but we can make it through this.

Texas Health and Human Services
COVID-19 Mental Health Support Line

If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed by the COVID-19 pandemic, **help is available.**

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Speak with a mental health professional for help dealing with anxiety, depression, stress, grief or worry 24/7.

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Call the toll-free COVID-19 Mental Health Support Line at **833-986-1919.**

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 **TEXAS**
 Health and Human Services



COVID-19 Questions

Basic Info

Is there a hotline I can call for more information on COVID-19?

Yes, please call 2-1-1 for all general COVID-19 questions.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19, also known as Coronavirus, is a new virus that has the potential to cause severe illness, including pneumonia, in some individuals.

How does COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 spreads from person-to-person by respiratory droplets. Normally, to come into contact with these droplets, individuals must be within 6 feet of someone who is contagious. Individuals may also become infected with COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or eyes. To learn more about how COVID-19 spreads, please visit [Transmission of Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) from [cdc.gov](#).

What are the symptoms and when do they appear?

Symptoms of COVID-19 may appear within 2-14 days of exposure. This is why quarantine for COVID-19 lasts 14 days. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. For more information on symptoms please visit [Symptoms](#) on the [cdc.gov](#) website.

How is COVID-19 treated?

There are currently no treatments for COVID-19. People infected with the virus should receive supportive care to relieve symptoms. These include getting lots of rest and drinking plenty of fluids. For severe cases, treatment may require hospitalization.

Who is most vulnerable to COVID-19?

Older adults, individuals who are immunocompromised and those with a serious medical condition such as heart disease, diabetes and/or lung disease are at the highest risk. For more information, please visit [If You Are at Higher Risk](#) on [cdc.gov](#)

I'm healthy. Why should I be concerned about COVID-19?

While young people generally have less risk of death

related to COVID-19, they can still have severe cases that can lead to hospitalization and they are also capable of infecting others.

I'm COVID-19 positive and want to breastfeed, how do I do so safely?

Mothers who are breastfeeding and become COVID-19 positive can continue to breastfeed as long as they wash their hands before touching their baby and wear a mask while breastfeeding.

Prevention

How can I protect myself and others?

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Practice social distancing and avoid being within 6 feet of people, especially those that are sick.
- Avoid touching your face; especially your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your elbow or a tissue. If you use a tissue, throw it away in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect commonly touched objects and surfaces such as door knobs, light switches and cell phones.
- Stay at home when you are sick or have symptoms of illness such as fever, cough and sore throat.

For more information, please visit [Prevention of Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) on [cdc.gov](#).

What is social distancing?

Social distancing is when an individual increases the physical space between them and other individuals. Staying at least 6 feet away from other people reduces the chance of catching COVID-19.

- Attending school online
- Visiting loved one electronically
- Working from home
- Cancelling or postponing conferences, large meetings and social gatherings

Continued on Next Page



What do I do if I think I have COVID-19? How do I get tested?

- **Step 1:** Call your primary care physician. If you do not have a primary care physician, please call the Abilene-Taylor County Public Health District at 325-692-5600.
- **Step 2:** Call ahead before going in person to the Abilene-Taylor County Public Health District or any other medical facility.
- **Step 3:** Don't go to the local emergency department for COVID-19 testing. The emergency department is only for those who need the most critical care.*

***If you are experiencing potentially life-threatening problems, call 9-1-1**

General questions about COVID-19? [Call 2-1-1](#)

Quarantine

What is self-quarantine?

Self-quarantine is being recommended for individuals who have recently traveled to certain parts of the country or world and for those who have been exposed to an individual that is infected with COVID-19. Additionally, those who have symptoms of COVID-19 without travel or known contact may also be asked to self-quarantine at this time.

Quarantine for COVID-19 lasts 14 days. This amount of time determines whether someone will become sick and contagious with COVID-19. If

someone is quarantined, they are expected to stay inside their home and at least 6 feet away from the other individuals in their household. A separate bathroom should be utilized for the quarantined individual, if possible. Individuals who are quarantined should also refrain from sharing cups, utensils, towels and similar items. They should not go out in public and should have shared areas in the home frequently disinfected with appropriate cleaners and disinfectants. Once your quarantine period ends, if you've had no symptoms, you are free to resume normal activities. However, if the COVID-19 outbreak is still taking place, you should still practice social distancing and other prevention measures.

For additional information regarding quarantining and caring for yourself at home, please visit [Caring for Yourself at Home](#) on [cdc.gov](#)

Contact Tracing & Spread

What is contact tracing?

Contact tracing is the monitoring and notification process our Epidemiology team will use to determine who may have been in close contact with a positive COVID-19 case, although contact tracing is used at times with other infectious diseases. Contact tracing helps us prevent further virus transmission and it allows the contact person to get tested, if deemed necessary.

Contact tracing has 3 main steps:



1. **Identify contacts:** Someone that tests positive with COVID-19 will be interviewed to find out where they have been and who they have come in close contact with. These individuals are identified as “contacts”.
2. **Contact listing:** After contacts are identified, they are contacted to inform them of their status. Our Epidemiology team will explain what this means, what actions they should take and what to do if they develop symptoms. Quarantine will be required for COVID-19 contacts. If an entire group of people is potentially exposed, such as a church or a store, we will notify that location of this possible exposure and when the possible exposure might have occurred.
3. **Contact follow up:** Our Epidemiology team will follow-up with contacts to monitor them for symptoms and request testing, if deemed necessary.

What does “community spread” mean?

Community spread means people are being infected with the virus with no related travel.

Reporting

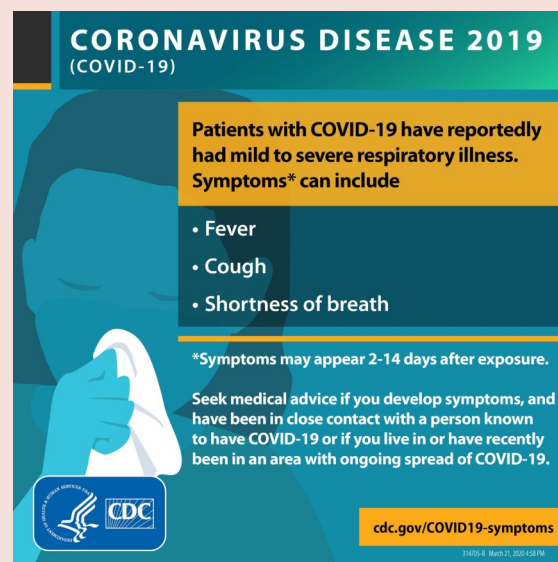
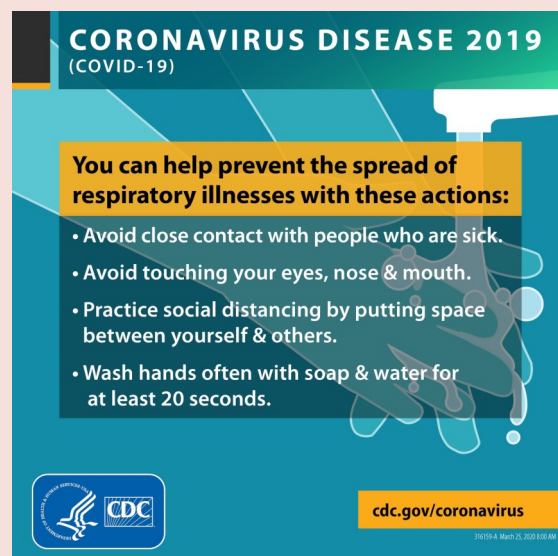
Are hospitals, medical providers and the Health Department required to report positive cases of COVID-19?

Yes. Positive cases of COVID-19 are classified as “immediately reportable” in the state of Texas and any providers, hospitals and labs must report to DSHS or the local health department immediately. DSHS has a notifiable condition hotline that is available 24/7.

Several Texas laws (Health & Safety Code, Chapters 81, 84, and 87) require specific information regarding notifiable conditions be provided to the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). Health care providers, hospitals, laboratories, schools, and others are required to report patients who are suspected of having a notifiable condition (Chapter 97, Title 25, Texas Administrative Code). Failure to report a notifiable condition is a Class B misdemeanor under the Texas Health and Safety Code, §81.049.

Coronavirus Disease 2019

The following information & more can be found on the CDC’s website at [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) or [cdc.gov/COVID19-symptoms](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19-symptoms).

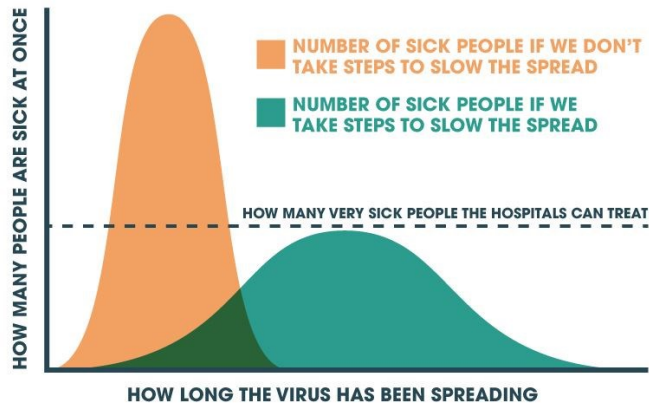


Current COVID-19 Numbers

Find graphics & more up to date information on our social media at [facebook.com/abilenehealth](https://www.facebook.com/abilenehealth).



COVID-19 Flattening the Curve



RECEIVE THE LATEST CITY INFORMATION & UPDATES
ABILENETX.GOV/COVID19

I heard that ingesting or injecting disinfectant into your body will protect against COVID-19.

Do not under any circumstance spray or introduce bleach or any other disinfectant into your body. These substances can be poisonous if ingested and cause irritation and damage to your skin and eyes.

Bleach and disinfectant should be used carefully to disinfect surfaces only. Remember to keep chlorine (bleach) and other disinfectants out of reach of children.

Mythbusting

For more myth fact-checking, please visit the World Health Organization's Myth Busters page:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>

Other Questions

What is "flattening the curve"?

"Flatten the Curve" to keep the number of sick individuals below the threshold of how many the hospitals can treat.

Everything You Need to Know About Cloth Face Masks

Cloth face masks and other face coverings protect others and help slow the spread of COVID-19. If you are out in public, at work, feel ill or are caring for someone that's ill or positive for COVID-19, it's recommended you wear a mask.

How to wear your mask:

- Check that your mask is clean and free of holes before each use. You should also wash your hands.
- When you put on your mask, make sure your nose and mouth are covered and that there are no gaps between your mask and your face.
- Don't touch the mask while you wear it.
- Remove the mask from behind and wash your hands immediately. You should then wash your mask using hot water and a disinfectant like bleach. You should dry your mask with high heat.
- Wearing a mask does not eliminate the need to socially distance, wash your hands or minimize your exposure to others





The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are dry cough, tiredness and fever. Some people may develop more severe forms of the disease, such as pneumonia. The best way to confirm if you have the virus producing COVID-19 disease is with a laboratory test. You cannot confirm it with this breathing exercise, which can even be dangerous.



World Health Organization

#Coronavirus

#COVID19

FACT:

Being able to hold your breath for 10 seconds or more without coughing or feeling discomfort DOES NOT mean you are free from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) or any other lung disease.



You can catch COVID-19, no matter how sunny or hot the weather is. Countries with hot weather have reported cases of COVID-19. To protect yourself, make sure you clean your hands frequently and thoroughly and avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.



World Health Organization

#Coronavirus

#COVID19

FACT:

Exposing yourself to the sun or to temperatures higher than 25C degrees DOES NOT prevent the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)



Frequent or excessive alcohol consumption can increase your risk of health problems.



World Health Organization

#Coronavirus

#COVID19

FACT:

Drinking alcohol DOES NOT protect you against COVID-19 and can be dangerous



Viruses cannot travel on radio waves/mobile networks. COVID-19 is spreading in many countries that do not have 5G mobile networks. COVID-19 is spread through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or speaks. People can also be infected by touching a contaminated surface and then their eyes, mouth or nose.



World Health Organization

#Coronavirus

#COVID19

FACT:

5G mobile networks DO NOT spread COVID-19



8 April 2020

Re-Open Texas

Stay up to date with which businesses can reopen by visiting abilenetx.gov/covid19.

Remember to stay vigilant and still practice social distancing during this time.

CITY OF ABILENE & GOVERNOR ABBOTT

Re-Open Texas

WHAT CAN RE-OPEN ON MAY 1

AT 25% CAPACITY

Restaurants Theaters Malls Retail Stores

AT 25% CAPACITY WITH HANDS-ON EXHIBITS CLOSED

Museums Libraries **WITH A MAXIMUM OF 4 PEOPLE** Outdoor Sports

WITH SOCIAL DISTANCING

Churches Doctor Offices Dentists Sole Proprietors & Businesses Already Open

SOME BUSINESSES MAY CHOOSE NOT TO OPEN

RECEIVE THE LATEST CITY INFORMATION & UPDATES AT
ABILENETX.GOV/COVID19

4.30.2020

CITY OF ABILENE & GOVERNOR ABBOTT

Re-Open Texas

WHAT CAN RE-OPEN ON MAY 8

Cosmetology Barbershops Nail Salons Hair Salons Tanning Salons

Can reopen with social distancing rules in place. Waiting customers should remain outside or in their vehicles. Stylists & customers should wear masks.

WITH OCCUPANCY RESTRICTIONS

Swimming Pools **AT 25% CAPACITY** Wedding Venues & Services

SOME BUSINESSES MAY CHOOSE NOT TO OPEN

WHAT CAN RE-OPEN ON MAY 18

WITH OCCUPANCY & CAPACITY RESTRICTIONS

Gyms & Exercise Facilities Bars Non-Essential Manufacturing Office Buildings

STAY VIGILANT

Cover your coughs & sneezes Stay home if you are sick Wash hands & use hand sanitizer Wear face masks when in public Stay 6-feet away from others Clean & disinfect commonly touched surfaces

RECEIVE THE LATEST CITY INFORMATION & UPDATES AT
ABILENETX.GOV/COVID19

5.8.2020

About the Health Department

Our Mission: To protect and promote the health of all in Abilene and Taylor County through research, advocacy, and services that prevent disease and enhance the well-being of the community and the environment in which they live.

Our Vision: Partnering with the community, we will create an environment where all have the opportunity to improve their health and quality of life.

Our Values:

PROFESSIONALISM: We exemplify professionalism through respect, excellence, and teamwork.

Quality: We provide exceptional, valuable services for our community.

INTEGRITY: We serve with accountability and consistency to build community trust.

Innovation: We effectively use evidence-based strategies and best practices to advance public health.

COLLABORATION: We collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to promote community health and prevent disease.



Health District

850 North 6th Street
Abilene, Texas 79601
(325) 692-5600
Monday-Friday
8:00 am – 5:00 pm

MERCY Health Care Center

1902 Shelton Street
Abilene, Texas 79603
(325) 676-6634
Monday-Friday
8:00 am – 12:00 pm
1:00 pm – 5:00 pm

abilenetx.gov/Health

Connect with us:



AbileneHealth
MercyHealthCareCenter



AbileneHealthDepartment

